

HP REMOVES NEARLY 30 WORKERS IN ITS OCALA OFFICE



Hewlett-Packard (HP), a multinational information technology corporation for personal computer products, axed around 30 employees and other contract workers in its office in Ocala, Florida. The laid off workers joined the growing numbers of people who are unemployed, which is currently around 18,000 in total. The IT company giant remained mum about the issue. HP spokesman, John McCool of MacGregor Abernathy, said that the company doesn't want to comment on the recent lay off for the time being. Also, McCool did not give further information on the status of its headquarters in Ocala.

After being removed from HP, affected employees proceeded to the Workforce Connection's Paddock Park office at 3300 SW 34th Ave., Suite 148, Ocala, to seek assistance in finding a new job. Laura Byrnes, Workforce Connection's community relations/communications manager, said that even though HP did not inform them about the impending job cuts, laid off workers will receive assistance from the company. "We are putting together out-placement service packages helping them file for unemployment benefits and register for online job searches. We are told impacted employees are receiving two months' pay."

The recent layoff at HP added to the rising number of Marion County's jobless people. The county's unemployment rate for October registered at 13.8%, higher than the national unemployment rate which is at 9.8%. Marion County's unemployment rate is the third highest in the state of Florida. However, the figure in October already represents a drop of 0.5% from September's unemployment rate and 0.1% lower than in October 2009.